

Governor Issues Order To Use Floodwater To Recharge, Store Groundwater

ACWA eNews, 03/14/23

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an Executive Order on March 10 that allows for new opportunities for water agencies and land owners to capture floodwater to recharge groundwater.

“ACWA applauds the Governor’s leadership in removing barriers to the replenishment of our groundwater resources,” said ACWA Executive Director Dave Eggerton. “By using floodwater to recharge depleted groundwater basins, we improve our resilience during dry years and relieve pressure on our flood control infrastructure. Expanding the state’s ability to recharge groundwater is a commonsense approach and is critical to meeting California’s water supply goals.”

The Executive Order includes wildlife and habitat protections, ensuring that any diversions would not harm water quality or habitat or take away from environmental needs. It states that the diversion of flood flows must meet certain conditions summarized below.

- The diversions must occur between March 10 and June 1, 2023 and must be for flood management and associated with groundwater recharge;
- A local or regional flood control agency, city or county must give notice that flows downstream of the point of diversion are at imminent risk of flooding and inundation of lands, roads, or structures;
- The diversions must cease when the flood conditions have abated to the point there is no longer a risk of flooding and inundation of lands, roads or structures downstream of the point of diversion; and
- Water must not be diverted to — or applied to —dairy land application areas, any agricultural field where pesticide or fertilizer application has occurred in the prior 30 days, and any area that could cause damage to critical levees, infrastructure, wastewater and drinking water systems or drinking water wells or drinking water suppliers.

The order also directs the Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to continue to collaborate on expediting permitting of recharge projects and to work with local water districts to facilitate recharge projects.

THIS PAGE
INTENTIONALLY
LEFT BLANK